



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/721,152	11/25/2003	Michael D. Grah	P50-0053	5544

7590 09/22/2005

Michelin North America, Inc.
Intellectual Property Department
P.O. Box 2026
Greenville, SC 29602-2026

EXAMINER

FISCHER, JUSTIN R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1733

DATE MAILED: 09/22/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/721,152

Applicant(s)

GRAH, MICHAEL D.

Examiner

Justin R. Fischer

Art Unit

1733

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 31 August 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9,11 and 16-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9,11 and 16-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-9, 11, and 16-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abinal (FR 2,794,686, of record) in view of Oberster (US 5,202,363, of record), Roland (US 4,929,684, of record), and McElrath (US 6,051,653, of record). It is initially noted that the examiner has included US 6,564,842 (related US case) in order to clearly set forth the disclosure of Abinal. The references are applied in the same manner as set forth in the Non-Final rejection mailed on May 3, 2005.

Abinal discloses a wheel assembly formed of a tire and a rim, wherein said assembly further includes a tire support 1 capable of supporting the tire in an underinflated operating condition. In describing the composition of the support, Abinal broadly suggests a natural or synthetic rubber-based compound may be used (Column 3, Lines 25-30- of '842). While the reference fails to expressly suggest the inclusion of a metal salt and a peroxide, such additives are extremely well known and conventionally used in a wide variety of rubber compositions, including tire rubber compositions, in order to provide enhanced physical properties, as shown for example by Oberster (Column 1, Lines 5-15 and Column 5, Lines 25-35), Roland (Column 1, Lines 25-30 and Column 2, Lines 5-20), and McElrath (Column 1, Lines 20-23). One of ordinary skill in

Art Unit: 1733

the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to include the claimed additives in the support composition of Abinal since the above noted benefits are consistent with the desired properties of a tire support. It is further noted that it is well recognized that metal salts provide additional benefits when included in rubber compositions, including improved thermal and oxidative stability and improved flex fatigue resistance. Absent any conclusive showing of unexpected results, it would have been within the purview of one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the composition of Abinal with a metal salt of a carboxylic acid and a peroxide curing agent.

Regarding the composition, the claims as currently drafted require rubber, 5-70 phr of a metal salt, and a peroxide curing agent. In this instance, each of the above noted references evidence the common use of a metal salt in combination with a peroxide curing agent. As to the specific amount of salt, Oberster suggests an amount between 5 and 100 phr and Roland suggests an amount between 20 and 80 phr. Absent any conclusive showing of unexpected results, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to include a metal salt in an amount between 5 and 70 phr as such a range is relatively broad and appears to be consistent with the amounts used in similar rubber compositions.

With respect to claim 3, 5, and 20, Abinal suggests the use of a natural rubber-based compound (natural rubber) or a synthetic rubber-based compound.

Regarding claim 4, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have readily appreciated the use of either of the claimed rubbers as they

Art Unit: 1733

represent common rubbers that are extensively used in a wide variety of tire components. It is emphasized that Abinal broadly suggests the use of natural or synthetic-based rubber compounds and applicant has not provided a conclusive showing of unexpected results to establish a criticality for the claimed rubber compounds.

As to claims 6 and 7, Oberster (Column 2, Lines 55-68), Roland (Column 1, Lines 28-31), and McElrath (Column 1, Lines 25-31) recognize the conventional use of methacrylates, particularly zinc dimethacrylate.

With respect to claim 8, Oberster (Column 5, Lines 25-36) and McElrath (Column 3, Lines 49-55) recognize the conventional use of the claimed peroxide curing agents.

Regarding claims 9, 11 and 18, fillers represent common additives that are incorporated into nearly every tire rubber composition to provide increased reinforcement. In particular, carbon black and silica are the most common fillers, wherein a wide variety of tire rubber compositions include both fillers in order to obtain the benefits of each filler (especially since carbon black is expensive). One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have expected the support composition of Abinal to include a reinforcing filler such as carbon black and/or silica. It is further noted that claim 11 does not actually require a reinforcing filler as the lower value for the range of 0 phr. In any event, the claimed value of 0-60 phr is consistent with the filler amounts conventionally used in tire rubber compositions.

As to claims 16 and 17, the claimed amounts are consistent with the conventional amounts of metal salts used in similar rubber compositions, as shown by

Art Unit: 1733

Oberster (Column 5, Lines 14-18) and Roland (Column 2, Lines 25-32). It is emphasized that one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have been able to appropriately select the amount as a function of the specific rubber composition.

Regarding claim 19, the claim as currently drafted does not require polybutadiene (lower range of 0 phr). In any event, Abinal broadly suggests the use of synthetic rubber-based compounds and it is extremely well known that polybutadiene represents one of the most common synthetic rubber compounds in the tire industry. Absent any conclusive showing of unexpected results, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to form the tire support of Abinal from a polybutadiene.

With respect to claim 21, Figures 2 and 3 of '842 depict the claimed support structure, including a base 2, a crown 3, an annular body 4, a plurality of partitions 13, and a plurality of connecting members or joining members 12. Additionally, the support of Abinal, as best depicted in Figure 1, includes a plurality of axially extending cavities, wherein said cavities extend at least halfway into the annular body.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments filed August 31, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues that the composition of Abinal is not the same as the inventive composition. Applicant further contends that the inventive composition is an improvement in the composition of Abinal as it provides advantages such as higher

Art Unit: 1733

modulus and reduced weight. Lastly, applicant argues that the inventive composition further provides reduced hysteresis, enhanced thermal stability, and enhanced oxidative stability.

It is agreed that Abinal generally suggests a tire support formed of a natural or synthetic-based rubber compound. While applicant contends that the inventive composition is an improvement over such a composition, the combination of prior art references of record suggest that the inventive composition represents an obvious variation over that disclosed by Abinal. In particular, each of Oberster, Roland, and McElrath teach rubber compositions incorporating a metal salt and a peroxide curing agent in order to provide improved properties, such as modulus and tensile strength. It is emphasized that these benefits are consistent with the benefits realized by the applicant and as such, they are not found to constitute a conclusive showing of unexpected results. Furthermore, the additional benefits, as set forth in the previous office action and maintained above, are consistent with the use of metal salts in tire compositions. Thus, while the inventive composition might represent an improved composition as compared to that of Abinal, said inventive composition is not seen constitute a unobvious variation over the composition of Abinal. In this instance, there would have been a reasonable expectation of success in modifying the composition of Abinal to include the combination of a metal salt and a peroxide-curing agent. It is emphasized that the combination of a metal salt and a peroxide curing agent is extensively used in a wide variety of elastomeric compositions, including those used in tires, where improved stress/strain properties are desired.

Conclusion

4. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Justin R. Fischer** whose telephone number is **(571) 272-1215**. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (7:30-4:00).


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas Dunn can be reached on (571) 272-1171. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 1733

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Justin Fischer

September 15, 2005


JEFF M. AFTERGUT
PRIMARY EXAMINER
GROUP 1300